

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 CU-02 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 MCT-01 AID-05
PC-01 /077 W

-----181213Z 130656 /43

R 172030Z JUN 77
FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7812
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAO PAULO 1590

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, BR
SUBJ: SAO PAULO STUDENTS PROTEST IN "NATIONAL DAY OF STRUGGLE"

REF: A) SAO PAULO 1328 B) BRASILIA 4205 C) SAO PAULO 1566

1. SUMMARY: BETWEEN 2000 AND 3000 STUDENTS IN CITY OF SAO PAULO PARTICIPATED IN STREET DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE REGIME ON JUNE 15. THE DEMONSTRATIONS, ANNOUNCED SINCE THE PREVIOUS ONES MAY 19 (REFTEL A), HAD BEEN PROHIBITED BY AUTHORITIES. POLICE REPORTEDLY MOBILIZED 20,000 MEN TO PREVENT STUDENTS FROM GATHERING, BUT STUDENTS MIXED IN WITH HEAVY DOWNTOWN PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR TRAFFIC, HOLDING LIGHTENING RALLIES SIMULTANEOUSLY IN SEVERAL PARTS OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA. POLICE STATED THAT 65 PERSONS WERE ARRESTED AND RELEASED, INCLUDING 11 ACTORS WHO PROTESTED IN SOLIDARITY WITH STUDENTS. JUNE 15 PROTEST BROUGHT OUT DECIDEDLY SMALLER NUMBER OF STUDENTS, BUT STUDENT MOVEMENT STILL HAS STEAM BEHIND IT. END SUMMARY

W2. POLICE ATTEMPTED TO PREVENT STUDENT PROTEST SCHEDULED SINCE MAY 19 IN DOM PEDRO PARK IN DOWNTOWN SAO PAULO BY STATIONING ABOUT 2,000 POLICEMEN THERE FROM EARLY MORNING. MILITARY POLICE
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BAND WAS ALSO SENT THERE TO PLAY ALL
AFTERNOON. STUDENTS,
SEEING USELESSNESS OF ATTEMPTING PROTEST IN SCHEDULED PLACE,
REPORTEDLY DESIGNATED BY WORD OF MOUTH A NUMBER OF OTHER LOCALES
WHERE THEY WOULD HOLD RALLIES. STUDENT PARADE BEGAN NEAR DOM PEDRO
PARK AT 5:20 P.M. CHASED BY POLICE, STUDENTS MOVED THROUGH
VARIOUS STREETS IN GROUPS RANGING IN SIZE FROM A DOZEN TO ABOUT

800 TO MEET AGAIN IN FRONT OF LAW FACULTY WHERE REPORTEDLY 2,000 GATHERED TO READ MANIFESTO IN FAVOR OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES, AMNESTY, AND END TO POLITICAL IMPRISONMENTS AND TORTURE. POLICE INTERRUPTED READING WITH WATER JETS AND TEAR GAS, FORCING STUDENTS INTO LAW FACULTY BUILDING. STUDENTS NEGOTIATED THEIR SAFE CONDUCT THROUGH POLICE LINES BY 8:30 P.M. THERE WERE SMALL RALLIES ON CAMPUSES OR IN BUILDINGS IN A FEW OTHER CITIES IN SAO PAULO, BUT NO CLASHES WITH THE POLICE WERE REPORTED.

3. ACTORS' PARTICIPATED IN PROTEST FOR FIRST TIME. AMONG ELEVEN ACTORS ARRESTED WAS RUTH ESCOBAR, ONE OF BRAZIL'S MOST PROMINENT THEATER EMPRESARIOS. ACTORS IN SAO PAULO HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING PETITION FOR PAST WEEK AGAINST POLITICAL IMPRISONMENTS AND CENSORSHIP. PERFORMANCES IN SAO PAULO THEATERS HAVE BEEN DECLARED FREE EVENING OF JUNE 16 TO MARK SOLIDARITY WITH ARRESTED STUDENTS AND ACTORS.

4. COMMENT: POLICE BUILDUP, AND FIRM WARNINGS FROM GOVERNOR, STATE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC SECURITY (WHO WARNED THAT POLICE WOULD NOT GO EASY ON STUDENTS) AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES PROBABLY WERE SUCCESSFUL IN INTIMIDATING THE STUDENTS. POLICE OUTNUMBERED STUDENTS BY ABOUT TEN TO ONE, AND POLICE REPORTED THAT TOTAL NUMBER OF POLICE ON ALERT IN CITY OF SAO PAULO WAS 72,000. MILITARY POLICE HAVE BEEN ON ALERT SINCE BEGINNING OF JUNE. IN SPITE OF LOW TURNOUT OF STUDENTS, CONGEN BELIEVES THAT STUDENT PROTEST MOVEMENT STILL HAS STEAM BEHIND IT.

5. SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT STUDENT PROTEST MOVEMENT ARE IN ORDER. THEY ARE MADE WITH REFERENCE TO SAO PAULO STUDENTS,
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BUT BELIEVED TO APPLY GENERALLY TO STUDENT MOVEMENT IN BRAZIL.

--POLICING OF STUDENT PROTESTS, SINCE BEGINNING, HAS BEEN AT LEAST ONE TO ONE. THIS AMOUNT OF POLICE ATTENTION IS INDICATION OF HOW SERIOUSLY REGIME TAKES STUDENT PROTESTS, PUBLIC DECLARATIONS TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING. HEAVY POLICE PRESENCE ALSO INCREASES CHANCES OF INCIDENTS OF POLICE BRUTALITY AND CONTRIBUTES TO BESEIGED FEELING BY STUDENTS.

-- PRESS PHOTOS OF POLICE BRUTALITY HAVE SHOCK EFFECT AND GAIN SYMPATHY FOR STUDENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, SAO PAULO PAPERS OF JUNE 16 CARRY FRONT PAGE PHOTO OF POLICEMAN STANDING OVER TWO GIRLS CRINGING ON SIDEWALK WHILE HE BRANDISHES HIS BELT.

-- STUDENTS ARE GETTING ENCOURAGEMENT FROM OTHER PARTS OF SOCIETY, AND ESPECIALLY SYMPATHETIC TREATMENT IN PRESS. WHILE THEY ARE DEMONSTRATING, PEOPLE REPORTEDLY THROW CONFETTI FROM OFFICE BUILDINGS AND MOTORISTS HONK HORNS IN UNISON. STUDENTS ARE PLAYING TO THIS SUPPORT BY SEEKING TO HOLD RALLIES IN MIDDLE

AND LOWER MIDDLE CLASS URBAN AREAS. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT ONE MILLION PEOPLE A DAY PASS THROUGH DOM PEDRO PARK, SCHEDULED SITE OF JUNE 15 DEMONSTRATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAO PAULO 1590

-- POLICE AND STUDENTS ARE GETTING MORE SOPHISTICATED --
AND HARDENED -- IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH EACH OTHER. FOR FIRST TIME, POLICE DID NOT USE HAM-HANDED TACTIC OF CLOSING OFF LARGE PORTIONS OF DOWNTOWN AREA TO COMBAT STUDENTS. JUNE 5 POLICE APPROACH WAS TO ATTEMPT TO OCCUPY WITH POLICE LOCALES WHERE STUDENTS PLANNED TO GATHER. STUDENT RESPONSE, DISPERSING INTO SMALL GROUPS FOR LIGHTENING RALLIES, RUNNING THROUGH TRAFFIC, THUS OBLIGING POLICE TO MOVE AGAINST PASSERSBY AS WELL AS STUDENTS, WAS FIRST USED BY STUDENTS IN THE 1967-68 PROTESTS.

-- MODERATE STUDENTS ARE THE DOMINANT FORCE IN THE SAO PAULO STUDENT MOVEMENT. THEY WON 45 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN ELECTIONS AT THE USP CENTRAL STUDENTS DIRECTORATE. THE REST OF THE VOTE WAS SPLIT AMONG SIX OTHER FACTIONS. SPONTANEITY AND A FEELING OF MISSION APPEAR TO BE DRIVING FORCES AMONG THE STUDENTS. AT ONE RALLY, A CON GEN OFF HEARD STUDENT SPEAKERS SAY THEY ARE OUT TO OVERTHROW THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP, DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS THE LEVER TO MOVE THE REST OF THE NATION, AND CALL THEMSELVES "THE TRUE ARMY." COMMUNIST AND OTHER EXOTIC LEFTIST FACTIONS EXIST AMONG THE STUDENTS, BUT THE JUNE 15 PROTEST WAS AGAIN MARKED BY RELATIVE MODERATION. THE GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY WOULD LIKE THE PUBLIC BELIEVE THAT STUDENT ACTIVITY MUST BE DIRECTED FROM
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SOMEWHERE -- IF NOT THE PCB, THEN THE CIA (REFTEL C).

-- STUDENTS HAVE ALSO TOLD CONGEN OFF THAT THEIR PARENTS
SUPPORT THEIR OBJECTIVES, THOUGH WORRIED ABOUT DANGERS OF CLASHES
WITH POLICE. MANY PARENTS HAVE PREFERRED TO URGE AUTHORITIES TO
BE PRUDENT, RATHER THAN TRY TO STOP STUDENTS FROM PROTESTING.

6. EMBASSY CONCURS.
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Message Attributes

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